

*March 25. 1748.*

*No 108*

PLAIN TRUTH,

OR

Downright Dunstable.

A

POEM

CONTAINING

The Author's Opinion of the sale  
of Poetic and Prose Performances:

WITH

Some Critical THOUGHTS concerning  
*Horace and Virgil.*

TOGETHER

With a few HINTS on the Author's AMOURS, as  
well as his private and uncommon Sentiments  
on GOVERNMENT.

*That's Down the Author he wants to say.*

*Post. page  
Walker*

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. ROBERTS, in Warwick-  
Lane. M.DCC.XL.  
(Price One Shilling.)

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OR

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( 1 )

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*The Author of this Poem, having at first intended (according to the present custom) to have publish'd it in the Folio size, as herein mention'd, did nevertheless upon second Thought resolve it into the Quarto; there being a sufficiency of Matter for that Purpose, not inclining (according to Use) to spin it out too far in the printing part, lest the Purchaser might so judge it over-dear. The Author therefore imagin'd it would thus become full as convenient and acceptable to his Readers in this Form.*

*Thus, all that's right, and all that's true*

*I own, I judg'd it always best*

*To grant my Reader such Request.*

*Since*

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PLAIN TRUTH

POEM

NOW, honest Friend, would'st thou,  
Or if I have sufficient reason

Thee, all that's *right*, and *all that's true*?  
I own, I judg'd it always *best*,  
To grant my Reader *such Request*.

What

B

Since

Since still I think *best Policy,*

Is to have *Truth and Honesty,*

Sincerely then without Offence,

What need I bring far-fetch'd Pretence,

My chief Intents to gain thy Pence.

Lay down thy Coin straight, take this up,

That I may go to dine, or sup;

And cherish me from Bacchus' Cup.

Object not, these Verses a'nt good,

Perhaps I may not have had due Food:

Or if I have sufficient fed,

I may not have been long at the Trade.

I may grow better, in short time,

By *Practice*, and the Use of Rhime.

What



What then my Verse it be not so good, I'll  
 Is't not enough, *Truth's understood* I'm  
 Must the *mean* *Sounds*, force ought you  
 Tears? *W- I own I'm a Poet- W-*  
 Like *Musick, which*, *like*, your *Bar*,  
 With soothing and *deceitful* *Sounds*,  
 Since *Lies*, with *Poetry* *abounds*,  
 Great TRUTH, in rough-hewn Shape ap-  
 pears,  
 She minds not *Dress*, nor has the *Fears*,  
 Nor thinks of your *Applause* or *Tears*.

But now I know, dear Friend, thou'lt ask,  
*Who is this Author under Mask?*

I'll tell thee then, in truth 'tis true,  
 I'm downright Dunstable, *True-blue.*  
 Nor judge of me as yet much slighter,  
 Because I own I'm a Prose-Writer.  
*Prose-Writer!* straight I hear you say,  
 What moves thee to write *Poetry?*  
 Since sure if thou wast good at *Prose,*  
 Thou'dst thus find *Victuals, Drink, and*  
*Cloathes.*

In truth, kind Friend, I will not sham,  
 I know not well, how good I am.  
 But sure it is, thou well canst tell,  
 Each thinks that he should wear the Bell.

Thus



Thus I think, I have some Applause,  
Whether in best or the worst Cause,  
In Science, or in Politicks,  
Or writ the Devil on two Sticks.  
Yet still I doubt the Subjects were,  
Too thoughtful for most Mankind's care.  
But last I writ, more whimsical,  
So better luck, did that befall.  
It is the Subject makes things well,  
Not meerly from being written well.  
Great Newton, one of his best Books,  
Was turn'd to waste, for Pastry-cooks;  
Till

\* His *Principia*, of which 300 were at first turn'd to waste Paper, though afterwards sold at a great Advance.

Till taken notice of in *France* I said

\* Or that he had a better *Chance* *Whether*

Prose-writing, Sir, it makes no jingle, in

Folks like to have their *Ears* *to* *trill* *in* *it* *10*

Besides, you want *too much* for *Pedice*, *Y*

The Question's not about the *Senses* *of* *T*

This is, *good Faith*, the reason why, *But*

I take to *writing Poetry* *to* *be* *better* *luck* *20*

For so in *strolling* *to* *other* *day*, *It* *is* *the* *Subject*

In Pamphlet-Shop a Poem lay, *Not* *mean* *10*

On a poor Subject as I thought, *Great* *Verse*

It could not be by many bought. *Was* *entire* *20*

Besides,

\* Alluding to somewhat of private History, tho' sufficiently well known. *Wrote* *paper* *though* *it* *was* *known*



Besides, so short, not forty Lines,

The Rest sure on this *near dinner*

*Six-pence*, said I, for two such Sheets

Encouragement he never meets

E'en tho' it be on *Politicks*

You much mistake it, *answer's made*

You do not understand *the Trade*

I've sold, *quoth he*, some hundred score

In truth, I ne'er thought so before

Ay, ay, said he, but *hit the time*

It ne'er can miss, if it be *Rhime*

'Tis strange, quoth I, so little there is

For that the Poet better Fare has

Full well, said I, if that's the case,  
 I'll gain this Coin in *two hours space*.  
 Whereas *at Prose*, 'tis ten times more,  
 And then mayn't sell perhaps *five score*.  
 If it ben't on some noisy thing,  
*Praise Pimp*, abuse a *Priest*, or *King*.  
 I strait conclude it *best of Trades*,  
 E'en better than *play Ace of Spades*.  
 Since thus, 'tis sure, you *ne'er can lose*,  
 Tho' sometimes you *mayn't have good Shoes*.  
 In any Season e'er *so scarce*,  
 Your time: you can *pop down a Verse*.  
 Thus tacking *Bits, and Scraps*, will do,  
 At *different times*, Prose is not so.



'Tis true you cry, the *Poet's Curse*,  
 Is still to carry a light *Parade*,  
 I heard 'twas so in *Days of yore*,  
 But now I think, 'tis so no more  
 In *Luxury*, Poets thrive best,  
 They either praise or plague, *like Poets*  
 And now we lay our Schemes so well,  
 You know 'em too, I need not tell  
 How many *Words*, and how few *Feet*,  
 Like *Chancery Writers*, in a Sheet.  
 But hold, say you, *Author*, I hope,  
 You don't yet fancy you are *Pope*.  
 No, truly, neither was he so,  
 I mention'd some short time ago

The other Poets, *think the same,*  
 The less they give, *the more's their Fame.*  
 Thus will I also, *if I can,*  
 Put my self too, *on the same plan.*  
 First then, my *Folio* Sheets are fold,  
 The *Quarto's* next I'll *turn to Gold.*  
 So to *Octavo's* soon they're brought,  
 In that *Size* readily they're bought,  
 And still for more convenient Use,  
 To *Duo-decim* them reduce.  
 A new Edition and *fine Letter,*  
 Adorn'd with *Prints,* will still sell better.  
 I'd add Notes, Hints, always amend,  
 Then change, correct, so never end.



Thus I'd *strike out, renew, rehearse,*  
 Whil'st *you find Money, I'll find Verse.*  
 But hold, cry you, 'tis *special funn,*  
 You thus run on, have never done.  
 This *Hudibrastick Rhime,* you say,  
 Like other Verse *you will not pay.*  
 There's *no such custom, no such thing;*  
 'Twas ne'er so pay'd by Prince, or King.  
 E'en *Butler's self,* ne'er had *such Pence,*  
 The Folks it seems then had *more Sense.*  
 Good Faith I say, it was *great Shame,*  
 That his best Pay was from *poor Rome,*  
 Fetter'd in Verse of shorter Feet,  
 Our Thoughts, sure more confinement meet.

Yet in your Pocket if I pierce,  
 I easily, can change my Verse.  
 But next you would be understood,  
 That I produce you something good.  
 You find great fault, and still you cry,  
 What will our greatest Poets say?  
 What if my Verse is seen by Swift?  
 Why sure he'll say I make a Shift.  
 What do I care how smart or gay,  
 Your Poets are, or what they say?  
 E'en let 'em say just what they will,  
 And that at rhiming I've no Skill.  
 Should *Horace*, *Virgil*, me assault;  
 With them in turn, I could find fault.



Were they not flattering, soothing, Tools?

Fit to praise Tyrants, and gull Fools.

A Monster thus to gain the Throne,

Consents to butcher all in Town;

Of his best Friends, he scarce spares one.

They serve to lull and lull the Pain  
Who will not call him great Potroon.

By  
Their Patron thus took these base ways,

\* Vide Hor. Od. 2. Lib. I.  
Sine mutata juvenem figura

Ales in terris imitatis, alma

Filius Maie, patiens vocari

Cæsaris Ultor:

Serus in Cælum redeas

\* Ode 5. Lib. III.

Cælo tonantem credidimus Jovem

Regnare: præsens Divus habebitur

Augustus, adjectis Britannis

Imperio, gravibusque Persis.

Vide Od. 14. Lib. IV. ad Augustum.

Quæ cura Patrum,

And Ode 15. Augusti Laudes.

Phæbus volentem prælia me loquitur

Phæbus volentem prælia me loquitur

By Flattery they themselves to save,  
 Their Lives, with their small Goods he  
 gave,  
 Is't so you judge 'em wise or brave?  
 When *Horace* from his Colours run,  
 Who will not call him great *Poltroon*.  
 Their Patron thus took these base ways,  
 Whilst they still were to sing his Praise.  
 (Enslav'd his Country) next these Elves,  
 Vain *poultry things*, too praise themselves. \*

*Away*

\* Lib. IV. Ode 8. ad M. Conforin.

*Gaudes carminibus carmina possumus,*

*Donare & pretium dicere muneri.*

Ode 9. Ad Lolium.

*Ne fortè credas interitura, quæ*

*Longe sonantem natus ad Ausidum.*

Ode XX. Lib. II.

*Non ustata, nec tenui ferar*

*Pennâ bisformis per liquidum Æthera*

*Vates :—*



*Away with 'em, I can scarce bear 'em,*

*And all their Friends, I do not fear 'em.*

*In monstrous times, such Weeds thrive best,*

*They ornament a Tyrant's Nest.*

*They serve to lull and blunt the Pain,*

*Of vilest Crime, still hide such Stain.*

*In Luxury, they thrive amain:*

*Of Tyranny bear up the Train.*

*Their Lyes and Flatt'ry, is good Sense,*

*Such times, it ne'er can give Offence,*

*The Tyrant grants 'em a Licence.*

*More Youth and Men have sure been lost,*

*By Horace' Book, you so much boast,*

*Than*

Than any Author you can name,

Or Strumpet of the vilest Fame.

What can be worse, good Sir, d'ye think,

Than sily sooth folks in to drink?

When drunk, the vilest Crimes are done,

The horriddest below the Sun.

He raises Passions of fond Love,

Debauch'd Examples gives of *Jove*.

Still more I doubt he does conspire,

T' inflame with most unlawful Fire\*.

But

\* *Horace* his unnatural Addresses to Boys, are but too observable in several parts of his Book, as well as that of *Virgil's Alexis*, &c.



But then Author, for sure cry you,

They were good Poets, you'll allow.

Well and what then, suppose I do?

The best of things turn'd to worst use,

It then becomes greatest abuse.

Besides that tho' their Verse were good,

With best of Wine \*, and best of Food,

Took their own time, for all they did,

Drank t' other glass, then eat a Kid †.

\* Lib. IV. Ode 12. *Ad Virgilium.*

*Jam veris comites*——

——*Nardo vina merebere.*

Lib. I. Od. 7. *Ad Plancum.*

*Mecum sepe viri, nunc vino pellite curas;*

† Epod. Ode 2.

*Beatus ille*——

*Vel Hædus ereptus lupo.*

Next shew'd, and told parts fit to smother,  
 Thus prais'd, lik'd, help'd they one an-  
 other,

Some think *Quintilian*, by the by,

Great Friend to both, too, *cast an Eye*.

And pray good Sir, *what d:d they do?*

Each a *small Book* they writ 'tis true.

In *their whole lives*, they did no more,

Still mended, *lick'd, relick'd* it o'er.

Nor in their Writings do we find,

They taught a *Science* to Mankind.

Of *Love*, they told us *pretty Tales*,

And to make verse, when *all Trades* fails.

Or



Or in repeated, *hateful Lays*,  
 Still trumpeting the *Tyrant's praise* \*.  
 Then Blunders too, *Criticks contend*;  
 Whilst one strikes out *'other will mend*.  
 Rare *Shakespear* and *Hudibras* too,  
 Instruct Mens Minds beyond those two.

Should they attack, I see *say you*,  
 You can find fault, *'tis very true*.  
 And now *Author*, I'm *almost willing*  
 To lay thee down my *boarded Shilling*.

\* Not only *Horace*, who shews his fulsome Flattery to *Augustus* in several of his Odes, but even also *Virgil* in his *Bucolicks* and *Georgicks*, as most particularly in his *Aeneid*, Vide the Description there of *Aeneas* his Armour, made by *Vulcan*.

Tho' free I am, to tell my mind,

To *somewhat* more I am inclin'd.

I'd rather read *Verse on Amours*,

Whether mine, your Friend's, or yours,

O Reader, *ben't* so hard to please,

*Faith* now, in that I'm much at ease.

Why should I talk of *Cupid's Darts*,

They touch me but on *Fits and Starts*.

Now whilst *that Boy*, comes in to peep,

Oft in *my Chair*, I fall asleep.

What is't to you all that's now past?

Whom *first* I lov'd, or who was last.

Whether the *meek*, the *grey-ey'd* 'twas,

The *Brown* complexion'd, *modest Lass*.

Or



Or *fair-hair'd bold, proud stately Queen,*

*Triumph'd o'er me, as soon as seen.*

If artful *Flora* strikes me deep,

Confounds my Thoughts, prevents my sleep;

Or still again my Heart has *stray'd,*

To the brown *sparkling black-ey'd Maid.*

Or the brown, comely, well-shap'd *she,*

So tall, genteel, modest and free;

One yet more *blissom* if you will,

More *stately* too, more artful still.

Or what as yet, if it should be,

The gentle Fair, the *well-bred she.*

That these two were of such degree,

Equal or better far than me.

Nor

Nor did I proudly e'er disdain

Those useful Hand-maids, gave me pain,

Tho' deck'd in home-spun Robes and  
plain.

When five Years old, I'll ne'er forget

My Mamma's Mantua-maker *Kate*.

First then in love I was right sure,

E'en wanted somewhat for the cure.

Next at fifteen, *Bab* the House-Maid,

I lik'd, nor was she e'er dismay'd;

She docile still, I most afraid.

On riper Years, with far less fear

Tall wanton *Lisa*, did appear.

Grave



Grave *Mary* next, the much more coy,  
All I could do ne'er did destroy,  
Her care; but still refus'd me joy.

Soon after her my Eyes were fix'd,  
On awful *Jane*, who caught me next;  
These if you judge a goodly Store,  
I could yet add as many more.

But now my Friend I'll tell thee this  
Of kissing Maids, thought so great Bliss,  
They only do't when they're inclin'd,  
Tho' I would kiss when I've a mind.

E'en whilst you ask 'em more and more,  
Scarce grant requests 'till *Love* is o'er.

Wouldst

'Tis true by gifts they're mostly gain'd,  
 The grand Affairs to be maintain'd.  
 But pray thee now, let us have done,  
 'Tis e'en full time that I be gone.

Nay hold, cry you, before you go,  
 I something further, fain would know.  
 Say somewhat now on *Politics*,  
 For *shame*, said I, are these your tricks.  
 Is't your own thought, or is't *Old Nick's*?  
 You sure would put me in a rage,  
 Why ask you not likewise my age?  
 How rich I am? Religion too?  
 Which ne'er are ask'd, and why would you?

Would'ft



Would'st thou then lead me in a Scrape  
 Or burning Coals on my Head  
 On Subjects such to speak my Mind  
 In Verse, I'm not greatly inclin'd  
 You may be of the other side  
 Yet still, I'm not less inclin'd  
 To please you all in every kind  
 If other side, I'm not less inclin'd  
 You fraight me with the same  
 Then I'm not less inclin'd  
 But I'm not less inclin'd  
 I'll speak my mind, I'm not less inclin'd

Or Riches, not because they're good;

O

E

I

I smile at Schemes of Government,  
 Yet strive in each to be content;  
 They all, 'tis said, from God are sent.  
 The whole Affair, some think it a Jest  
 Since every where they cry 'tis best  
 Of just and right, all make great Power  
 The strong still rules his weaker Brother  
 Whilst Power goes on by Heritage  
 The weak shut up as in a Cage;  
 Of Justice, Reason, they may boast  
 The strongest still will rule the weak  
 Men Rule as choof, by their great Blood,  
 Or Riches, not because they're good;



Or that they are the *wisest Men*,  
Since that's a thing scarce ever seen,  
Let us then take it as it goes,  
Lest some should pull us by the Nose.  
In every Place, some rule the rest,  
So *where you are*, still that's *the best*.  
Republick or the regal State,  
Is not th'Affair now in Debate.  
I live in either as 't's my Fate.  
What sort of Monarchs Men should choose,  
Nations determine, not my Muse.  
Which Prince is right, and which is wrong,  
Is not the Business of my Song;  
That those decide, who are most strong.

For

For they can prove it by a right,  
Such they still choose have all the right.  
What matters it then what I say,  
Or who it is, that wins the Day.  
Just as the man who bears the load,  
Is much the same, though he be old.  
Thus I'm neither for King, nor for  
But can submit to stronger Power;  
And rather too than choose to live in  
What sort of Monarchs Men should choose  
Hollow the God, (ye Gods) will

*\* In Charles the 1<sup>st</sup>'s Reign, it is said there were several Puritans, who rather chose to be hang'd than say, Which Prince is right and which is wrong.*

Is not the Business of my Song,  
That those decide, who are most strong.

For